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*Report – Courtesy Call*

## **“By Director General National Institute of Maritime Affairs”**

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## PICTURES OF THE EVENT



An 8-member delegation from the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) led by Vice Admiral (Retd) Khawar Ali Shah, Director General NIMA paid a courtesy call to the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on May 20, 2019. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI welcomed the delegation.

The delegation was briefed about ISSI by Mahrukh Khan, Research Fellow.

Introducing NIMA, Vice Admiral (Retd) Khawar Ali Shah stated that the Institute is a policy oriented think tank working on blue economy and maritime tourism. It aims to formulate strategies that are not divorced from realities. He said that there is a lack of framework that is preventing entrepreneurs to step into the field of maritime tourism and sports activities. Pakistan, he said needs a maritime tourism policy. He suggested that NIMA and ISSI should join hands and develop research linkages that cater to the needs of both institutes.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, in his remarks, stated that Indian Ocean Region is going to be the center of international and regional politics for the years to come. We are up against an uphill task as multiple actors are now part of the Indian Ocean politics. China now has access to the Indian Ocean, and India and US will not like this since their primary concern is the competition with China. The new Indo-Pacific strategy has brought new challenges in the South China Sea, and India has willingly become a proxy of America. Regarding cooperation with NIMA, he said that ISSI analyzes developments with a broader strategic perspective, and cooperation with NIMA would be beneficial for both the institutes. This will allow ISSI to focus more on the maritime domain.

Commodore Babar Bilal referred to a previous conference titled, “Maritime Economy and the Geopolitics of Indian Ocean Rim: Challenges for Pakistan” which was held in partnership with Bahria University at the ISSI, and how similar conferences can be arranged in future. Muhammad Abbas Hassan, Research Associate at ISSI gave a brief overview of the panel discussion on Blue Economy that was arranged in a conference titled, “China Pakistan Cooperation: Next Level” at ISSI.

Vice Admiral Khawar Ali Shah suggested that cooperation can be on thematic areas, and maybe Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) can be engaged to develop a maritime forum which can

address the non-traditional threats at sea. He said Pakistan must work at its internal consolidation.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry stated that OIC is practically deadlocked because of rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Arab and Gulf states are meeting in Mecca over the developing tensions, but a positive outcome is not expected. Pakistan, he said, is facing very tough days ahead. Forces are working actively against Pakistan and a gray hybrid war is being initiated against the country. Pakistan will have to take measures to steer the country in the right direction.

He thanked the NIMA delegation for their interest in ISSI and strengthening institutional linkage.